

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): An incubator having a dry analysis element chamber in which a dry analysis element is accommodated and held at a constant elevated temperature, the incubator comprising:

a pressing member which is disposed in the upper portion of the dry analysis element chamber and presses downward a dry analysis element inserted into the dry analysis element chamber;

a guide member which supports the pressing member for up and down movement along a guide surface thereof;

and a heater which heats the guide member to a predetermined temperature,
wherein the pressing member is in contact with the guide surface and is moved up and down along the guide surface in response to insertion and removal of the dry analysis element into and from the dry analysis element chamber.

wherein the pressing member comprises a planar surface sized to contact a substantial area of the dry analysis element.

2. (original): An incubator as defined in Claim 1 in which the pressing member is urged downward by a spring.

3. (original): An incubator as defined in Claim 1 in which the pressing member is held in the dry analysis element chamber to be removable therefrom.

4. (new): An incubator having a dry analysis element chamber in which a dry analysis element is accommodated and held a constant elevated temperature, the incubator comprising:

a pressing member which is disposed in the upper portion of the dry analysis element chamber and presses downward a dry analysis element inserted into the dry analysis element chamber;

a guide member which supports the pressing member for up-and down movement along a guide surface thereof; and

a heater which heats the guide member to a predetermined temperature,
wherein the guide member is in contact with the pressing member to heat the pressing member using the heat received from the heater.

5. (new) The incubator as defined in claim 4, further comprising an upper disc member of the incubator holding the heater, and wherein the upper disc member is in contact with the guide member.

6. (new) The incubator as defined in claim 5, wherein the guide member has an inclined portion which is heated by the heater, and wherein the inclined portion of the guide member heats the pressing member.

7. (new) The incubator as defined in claim 6, wherein the pressing member defines a portions of a chemical analysis chamber, the chemical analysis chamber holds the dry analysis element.

8. (new) The incubator as defined in claim 7, wherein the pressing member defines a top surface of the chemical analysis chamber.

9. (new) The incubator as defined in claim 4, wherein the pressing member is held in the dry analysis element chamber to be removable therefrom.

10. (new) The incubator as defined in claim 9, wherein the pressing member is removed from the dry analysis element chamber independently from other elements comprising the incubator.

11. (new): The incubator as defined in claim 4, wherein the pressing member has a chamfered surface disposed so as to abut the dry analysis element as the dry analysis element is inserted into the chemical analysis chamber.

12. (new): The incubator as defined in claim 4, wherein the pressing member comprises a planar surface sized to contact a substantial area of the dry analysis element so as to facilitate transferring heat.

13. (new): The incubator as defined in claim 1, wherein the pressing member has a chamfered surface disposed so as to abut the dry analysis element as the dry analysis element is inserted into the chemical analysis chamber.